The AMERICAN SPECTATOR

A LITERARY NEWSPAPER

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The AMERICAN SPECTATOR

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EDITORIAL

IT became the fashion, after the War, to declare that the world had been ruined by Old Men. These bogies were particularly invoked by those disgruntled warriors who, having rushed in to salvage civilization, returned home to find that they had merely taken part in another war. The fruits of their wisdom are still with us in the shape of tomes in which are set forth precisely the ideas and emotions which their authors did *not* feel when in active service, the experiences which they have undergone only in retrospect. The burden of it all has been that, if the Young Men had only been in control, the world today would be a brighter and better place.

The fallacy in this line of reasoning is that only the most superficial critic could pretend that, imbecility for imbecility, the Old Men and the Young Men offered very much choice, that is, to the discriminating who retained possession of their senses. In every one of the belligerent countries the outstanding advocates of peace, of reasonableness, of moderation, were, it so happens, all middle-aged or older. Hectic patriotism was not confined, as so many post-war pacifists would like to believe, to bellicose, elderly gentlemen who were over military age. The rank and file of officers and men had, if we may recall so sordid a detail, precious little patience with any one, irrespective of age or sex, who did not adopt the current war cries. The feet of the Young Men trampled down many an expression of honest, disinterested opinion.

Nowadays, if one may judge by the superstitions cultivated in certain circles, we are asked to credit the Young Men with virtues which they claim, but which they have neither displayed nor proven. Neither in wartime nor in peace have they shown such special aptitudes for clear thinking and effective leadership as to warrant the confidence they would so fondly inspire. All over Europe at this moment they are rushing about in black, brown, green or red shirts, raising their arms in Roman salutation and obeying, as usual, the behests of a spellbinder who can stir up those mob emotions which are apparently their only substitute for thought. If they wish to lead rather than be led, why do they not assume command, why do they not bring forward a single solution to the problems with which they and their elders are confronted?

Our suspicion is that, as since time immemorial, they are waiting for instructions, that Young Men of inexperience are not equipped in some mysterious ultra-modern way to play a rôle which past history has denied them. This suspicion is confirmed by the evidence. When not being aroused to acts of herd violence, what are their preoccupations? What youthful ideas do they promulgate, what new ideals, what dreams beyond the imagination of older men? Well, some of them hold a strong brief for the startling innovations of Thomas Aquinas. Others, presumably, are unaware that the teachings of Karl Marx are, whatever else may be said of them, the work of a man who had passed the age of youthful illusion. In so far as any faint stirrings of the brain, as distinct from the muscles, are concerned, it would be fair to say that a return to orthodoxy in religion and to communism in politics is the mark which distinguishes the younger from the middle-aged and the elderly generation of intellectuals.

Whatever we may think of theocracy, communism or dictatorship, we can hardly be expected to rejoice in them as great novelties, indicating the irrepressible bubbling up of the spirit of eager youth. Bad as conditions may be in the modern world, we are still far from the dreary horror of the Middle Ages. Our theocrats will woo us in vain. Dictators are not unknown evils, but they have invariably been at least men of middle age. It would simplify life for our infantilists and the victims of precocious senility if Youth at the helm could solve our difficulties. If such a youth arises, we shall hear of him and he will have no difficulty in taking the place which his innate authority confers upon him. Meanwhile, let us resign ourselves to the sad fact that the amount of human intelligence available is still strictly limited, and there is not the slightest indication that its distribution decreases with age.

TO REMEMBER

by SHERWOOD ANDERSON

IT'S silly to forget it—what America is. It's so easy now.

Adrift again. It's an American passion in me—to go, look, see. In me there is an undying love of automobiles. I should be a tester for some big factory. I'm a wonderful driver. In my hands a car goes more miles and easier, with less wear and tear on the car, than a car in the hands of any other man I've ever seen or ridden with. The voice of the motor is the voice of my beloved. Every year the cheap cars get better, lovelier in outline, more sensitive to the touch, more enduring. The cheap car I have now has been run thirty-five thousand miles. The car actually likes it. It likes me. It still sings gayly along the road, and when it gets dirty I run it into some wayside creek, at a ford, and wash its face, hands and body. At some places now, out in the Middle West, gas is down to eleven cents.

The cooking gets a bit better. All of this talk by the doctors, the ones who write the syndicated stuff in the newspapers, the family doctors, even in the small towns now . . . no more beef steak and fried potatoes for breakfast, even in Tennessee . . . diet's the thing now . . . a long life, if a discouraging one . . . eat more fruit and vegetables . . . it's all beginning to take effect. The ham sandwich and the hot dog are going. Yesterday . . . where do you think? . . . that's right, in Southern Illinois, I got a great plate of finely cooked vegetables with a glass of buttermilk for fifteen cents. The waitress says to me, she says, "That's right. That's the sensible way to eat."

For me there is no definite good life, either in the city, or in the small town, or on the farm. With the car I continually mix them up. It's any amount cheaper and nicer than the attics we poets used to live in. A man may write on a flat stone, under a bridge, near Paducah, Kentucky . . . (There is a swanky big hotel in Paducah—called The Irvin Cobb—huge painting of Cobb in the lobby—prices a bit high for a modern novelist—art also, however, gets on.)

Touch with people picked up on the road. Keep always a vacant seat for the chance adventure. Confusion. They all apologize for being down and out. It's an almost universal American impulse. "I am an American and should have risen in the world. This is the land of opportunity." They all want to explain how it happened; they didn't cut it, didn't make the grade. Not one I've seen in this present drift—and I've seen and talked to plenty—as yet really blaming capitalism, the machine, our American overlords, anything much but self. "I should have made it. It's the land of opportunity all right. It's all my own fault." Oh, sweet Americans.

Is it sweetness or colossal stupidity? I don't know. It's a bit discouraging to one who, like myself, is always getting hopped up and writing fervently, even feverishly—*The Revolution, The Revolution.*

The main point of this drifting that I so love—I tell myself—to remember (may the gods not let me forget) the land itself. It's so gorgeous, so big, so infinitely varied. Mountains, valleys, rivers, strips of forests coming down to look at roads, little creeks, prairies, pine forests, beaches facing oceans and lakes, rich land—plenty of rich land yet . . . the vastness of it . . . the gorgeous swank and richness of it. . .

. . . to remember how utterly silly it is to have depression here—down-and-outs apologizing for being alive . . . how fast they learn to whine . . . whining and apologizing for being alive, even as they walk—homeless and hungry, like as not—across the face of it.

Will we ever have sense enough to take what is so obviously spread out so temptingly before us here? To remember it could be done?

SERVANTS OF GOD
No. 7

Associated Press dispatch to the Philadelphia Record:

MUNCIE, IND.—The Rev. G. Lemuel Conway, pastor of the Madison Street Methodist Episcopal Church here, accused of attempting to attack an eighteen-year-old girl member of his congregation, was found guilty of "imprudent ministerial conduct" by an ecclestiastical jury tonight.

He was ordered suspended for a year.

His accuser, Miss Helen Huffman, testified at the trial. She said the minister made improper advances to her in his automobile on a lonely country road last December 20.

Conway also was charged with knocking Willard Aurand, choir master at the church, over the chancel rail at a Sunday evening service in January.

THE WORST BOOK OF THE MONTH

LAWRENCE AND BRETT: A FRIENDSHIP

By the Hon. Dorothy Brett

5¾ x 8⅝. Announced price $3.00

Philadelphia: Lippincott

(Passed upon in galley form, Nos. 1 to 99)

THE NOVELIST

by SULAMITH ISH-KISHOR

ITS main character was called Man and its theme was ultimate happiness. It was rejected at all the causal dynamos of Natural Law. "Humanity? A preposterous notion! God? Ha-ha!" and the laughter of the spheres made rhythmic music through the whirling ether. "Nature can make no use of your idea. Again—what's your name? God? Your creation is a mere mad jumble. By all means let us analyze the thing. Motivation? There is none. Cause and effect? They are placed in no relationship that is manifest to science. Cosmic uses? None Beauty? Dubious; not our type of thing. Characters? An insult to our orbéd order. To be frank, we find it revolting, a misfit, an abortion. Better burn it up and forget it; you must not fix your mind on that sort of thing or you will lose your reason."

The shock did drive God insane. As he perused his Book over and over, reading it aloud from cover to cover and back again to try and find what justice there might be in these shattering criticisms, he lost his ability to distinguish between Fantasia and the Real, and gradually humanity, to him, came true.

Tremendous gladness seized upon his wits and he went roaring with joy. Here was the World! Here was his Book! His thought was born! Yammering with delight, he moved all around his creation reading bits of the Book aloud, and those myriad split-atoms from his brain thought this was thunder and they stopped their business with the soil and crawled into little round shelters.

But sometimes he found a split-atom that could remember, and to it he would whisper the secret of whence it came, for he craved recognition, he wanted to be known as the author of his Book. The split-atom would listen and would tell others, and the others would smash him up and put him away into the earth. There was no Book, they said. There was no author. At any rate, he was a very bad author; he had given his work no motivation, no sequence of cause and effect, like Nature; it had no purpose, its beauty was of a dubious sort; it was all a jumble—and if a being called God had made it, he must be crazy, and they had their own affairs to mind.

God apologized to his split-atoms and told them he was aware the Book needed revision, and he would re-write it. "What!" they exclaimed. "We—to be revised! Absurd! We are the ultimate perfection of which you are capable!"

This annoyed God, and he wanted to tear up the Book. But he was too late; it was alive. Every word was a family, every letter a human being. He watched them for a few thousand years, and at last he began to see what justice there had been in those shattering criticisms, and to think that he should have burned it and forgotten it. And he began to cry, and after he got tired of his useless crying, he looked up at the causal dynamos of Natural Law, and said, "No, it is not as I intended it to be. But, after all, I do still think there was something in the idea."

THE ORIGINAL MYSTERY THRILLER

by BOB BROWN

IN the maze of present-day mystery stories there is such an excessive employment of the gadgets of modernity that we are inclined to think ourselves exceedingly smart in our century. Yet mystery stories have existed from times remote, even before the beginning of our calendar. In fact, the original recipe of the gangster story, the granddaddy of all thrillers, was recorded in the time of the three kingdoms in China, in the third century of our era. We quote it from Timkowski's "Travels of the Russian Mission Through Mongolia":

The Kingdom of Chu, founded by Lieou Chin or Lieou Pei, having been invaded by the enemy, Koung Ming ordered a stone statue of a man, of the ordinary size, to be set up on the high road by which the hostile army must advance.

This statue held in one hand a sword, and in the other a book, the leaves of which were impregnated with poison.

The General of the enemy's army coming to this spot, and seeing the book open, began to read it and found it interesting. As he frequently put his fingers to his mouth in order to moisten them, to turn over the leaves more easily, he soon felt the effect of the poison. He attempted to retire, but could not, his coat of mail being attracted by the pedestal, which was composed of loadstone.

Enraged at this, he seized the sword which the statue held in the other hand, and struck it. This action proved still more fatal to him. The stroke having caused sparks to fly, they kindled the combustibles enclosed in the interior of the statue, the explosion of which killed him.

By simply changing "coming to this spot" to "being put on the spot" we bring the third century mystery up to date. Fu Manchu himself, with all his diabolical gifts and modern refinements of torture, could hardly improve on such a fast-moving continuity of criminal intent.

POOH POOH TABU

by THOMAS WOOD

SINCE the subject has been brought up by countless movies and at least a hundred head of literati in the last half-dozen years, with several precincts yet to be heard from, it might be well to re-establish certain verities in the matter of South Sea paradises.

In defiance of accepted juridical process, the case for the defendant should be presented first. Unfortunately, its salient feature renders it somewhat baffling of attack, since it has no more body than the creatures who sit on bedposts the morning of January 1st. It appears, in fact, that the defendant is not the South Sea islands themselves, but rather the palimpsest of ideas which has developed, under forced feeding, in the popular mind.

This palimpsest reveals in successive layers a fairly comprehensive picture. Here is climate, and here is ethnology; there—very faint but very enticing—is a scrap of menu; next, in remarkable clarity is industry (copra); and scattered about, with suspicious legibility, is Love-Life. Manny in the Bronx, Otto in St. Louis, and Armand in New Orleans carry this *pasticcio* with them to each new idyll of cohabitation under the frangipani.

For them—and doubtless for Eric of Sutton Place—the South Sea islands are just over the horizon from Hawaii, where, as they know, the luxury steamers turn around and hurry back to San Francisco. From Honolulu, a busy trading station, our halliburtons know that they have to travel by copra schooner or war canoe. They expect to engage such passage (*a*) by bartering over a rough table, by the light of a candle stuck in a bottle, with a greasy-faced villain in crumpled linen; or (*b*) by dangling a jack knife, a plug of tobacco and a yard of Kresge's turkey-red before the impassive face of a native chieftain whose gods forbid him to allow palefaces within his paradise.

This much accomplished, the boys unfasten their collars, throw away their razors and set out early one morning. They conveniently arrive early the same morning. As the natives on the beach sight them, a melodious twittering greeting goes up and twenty villagers swim out to meet them, producing from their loin-cloths *lei*, a gardenia-like flower for the ear, along with pineapples, bananas, and half a roast pig. All these are presented to the blond water-gods. As our heroes step on the beach—which is deep with silver sand, laved by sparkling blue waters and backed by cool woods and violet mountains—laughing girls surround them to examine their white skins. At a clap of the chief's hands, twelve men start demolishing the jungle to build a house, and the village virgins begin chewing *kava* for the feast. This delicatessen is ready in ten minutes and the guests are conducted to the right and left hand of the chief's seat.

As the food, (pineapple, bananas, *kava* and half a roast pig) is set before them, Russ Columbo's orchestra strikes up somewhere in the thicket and eight girls file out for the Ceremonial Dance of Welcome, rich with symbolism. In the first part of this dance, the girls face the guests, cant one hip and wave the arms out to the right, then, canting the other hip, wave the arms out to the left. In the second part, the girls turn their beauteous bottoms to the guests, and canting alternate hips, wave the arms out to the left and then to the right. Through it all, our heroes, now dressed only in canvas trousers torn off at the knee, leaving bronzed legs and torsos bare, smilingly try to eat as the happy Boonga Boongas do, tearing handfuls of crisp pork from the young pig and sopping up gobbets of pineapples, bananas, and *kava*.

Leaving this pagan jollity, the boys wander delightedly through the lush forest. Hearing gleeful cries and splashings, they part the palm fronds and discover a deep blue pool fed by a sparkling waterfall. Its surface is being beaten to a discreet froth by young, shapely, café-crême virgins. Seeing the white gods, they dash shrieking to cover, all save one—or rather two—who screen themselves with discretion and frangipani and smile shyly, roguishly at the interlopers.

Returning to the village, some three hours after they have landed, they find the sun conveniently setting and the elders retiring to their several huts. Lingering to watch the sun sink behind the palms, the bananas, the pineapples and half a roast pig, they catch sight of two slim young forms standing, backs to tall trees, faces lifted to the evening sky. Stepping softly, in opposite directions, our heroes come up to the little flowers of Boonga Boonga and masterfully tilt the chins that have fallen timidly to half-covered bosoms. As the last segment of the sun sinks below the horizon, stalwart arms encircle the girlish shoulders and Russ Columbo's boys restate, in an orchestral *tutti*, the theme song, "Boonga Boonga Girl o' Mine."

II.

There are romantic pilgrims who have opportunity, money and urge nearly enough in coincidence to send them in search of this sort of thing. More likely than not they will aim at Tahiti, and to hell with the discomfort of getting there.

It is a blow, first-off, to discover that the chief discomfort of the journey is dressing for dinner. Steamers of considerable size and of ample resource as to cuisine and service set them right on the "beach," as the steel and concrete pier at Papeete is called. Not swimmers with love offerings, but touts from hotels greet them. Not a lane of palm shacks, but several streets of Bronxville stucco villas constitute the aspect of the town. And not a feast of pig and pineapple, but an invitation—if you're lucky—to have a pick-me-up at Bohler's Bar is the entertainment.

Of course, if the pilgrim is genuinely ardent in his quest, he may quickly become impatient of cabaret evenings alternating with four-year-old Hollywood movies in a quondam garage; of the failure of the tentl.-rate artists and writers resident on the island to welcome him as a fresh breeze in a waste land; and of the vehemence in a bronze young lady's "Aite!", which means "No!"

If so he will conclude that Tahiti and its people have been spoiled by too much traffic with the Western World, and that if he goes farther he will fare better.

For some hundreds of miles about Tahiti, which is itself volcanic, the Pacific is speckled with archipelagoes of coral, each bearing a glamorous name, *e.g.*, the Outer Paumotus, Tahama, Anaa, Katiu, Phaite, Fakarava, Raruia. These are reached only by trading schooner, unless one is fortunate enough to command the services of a French gunboat. My errand took me to Makemo, which sounds more like a port on the Baltic but which is actually in the Outer Paumotus, five hundred miles east of Papeete. An Englishman writing a book about them wanted photographs, and I dazzled him with a Voigtländer.

Now—alas, for romance!—one does not bum about these islands. One is examined and franked by French authorities, who persist in the astonishing notion that their pagan wards are better off let alone. And passage is booked prosaically enough through an agent, frequently Jewish.

If, further, you will some day leave a plate of Brooklyn kitchen refuse in the hot sun for an hour or two, it will generate much the same smell as a copra schooner. And it will attract much the same vermin, the most numerous of which will be long, brown and shiny, with very nervous antennæ. If you will sit on a hard plank with a smelly old carriage robe as a canopy over your head and the plate, then allow someone to play a garden hose on you, you will approximate the discomfort of the voyage to Makemo. Someone should also jump up and down on the extended end of the plank to complete the picture.

Making the journey to Makemo, one lounges in no deck chairs beneath a genial sun. One stays stretched on the skylight until soaked by the rain and mist, then goes below until driven forth—blue, shivering and longing for the nice, warm, dry Burberry that is eleven thousand miles away in moth balls—preferring the dismal wet and the gray sea to the smell and the noises of a passenger for Katiu who is ill out of all proportion to his size.

The promise of being "taken care of" by the native chieftain may leaven the weight of misery, and the thought of long lazy days alone on the shiny beach and of long tropic nights on the same beach, not alone, may keep the spirits alive. But the reality must be seen to be depreciated.

III.

Makemo, for instance, is fifty-six miles long, its greatest width is one mile, and its highest elevation—unless one climbs a palm tree—is six feet. The only fruit tree, indeed the only vegetation, aside from the cocoanut palms, is a dwarf banana plant growing in a tub of imported earth. It is the property of the chief. He is a native all right, and a real chief and an honorable man. He wears a *pareo* and administers the affairs of his tribe with a kindly hand. But he can produce a *Croix de Guerre* which he won on the Western Front. His entertainment—and it is the best available—is finished when he turns the visitor over to the Chinese storekeeper.

The native feasts and banquets consist of tinned salmon for lunch and tinned beef for supper, the order reversed on Sundays. Occasionally a bit of fresh fish is offered, and this, by strict concentration on something else, can be eaten.

There seems to be a remarkable hiatus in the range of ages. There are males from seven months to seventy years. But the females reach the age of ten and, apparently, are not seen again until they are forty. Yet, even if this were not so, one would still find oneself without more than a grinning acquaintance with personable females. The Methodists and the Anglicans got here, and all over the South Pacific, long before the experimental young men from America. And they have done their work well. In the Tongas a third officer said the chief was going to "fix up a party" for him and such guests as he chose to select. At the appointed place were a number of slim and smiling girls. There was ample beer—at room temperature. And the young lady Tongans consumed it with an almost Munich en-

(*Continued on Page 2, Col. 1*)

The Editors suggest that the business of encouraging the drinking of beer in order to restore prosperity be not confined to the United States, but that its efficacy as a world-saver be immediately impressed upon Germany, Austria, China, Peru and other such countries.

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(Continued from Page 1, Col. 5)

thusiasm. But at a quarter past ten there was not a female in sight. The duennas had extracted the demoiselles from the gathering with great finesse and taken them home. The next morning they were quite as enthusiastic at choir practise as they had been at the *Bierfest*.

In Makemo one is, perforce, celibate. And it's quite all right. For there is seldom a moon and there is no sand.

Natives can walk without shoes, but the paleface needs the heaviest of boots, and then had better sit still. When the boys on the reef called to me one day, I started off on the run to see what had excited them. An injudicious step sent me tail-over-tippet and when I sat up my boots were slashed in three places and my leg was swelling visibly. There was no blood, only a long whitish furrow. The lads helped me back to the Chinaman's and the chief delegated a boy to tend my wound with hot packs. Coral poisoning combines a peculiar painfulness with a maddening pertinacity. Now, some eight months later, the bruise has still to be dressed every day. Another endearing possibility is the chance of stepping upon the pungapunga, a single-spined fish which lies in shallow water, invisible against his background. His barb poisons even the natives and gangrene may be counted on with great confidence.

The royal entertainment comprises (*a*) solitaire, or (*b*) cribbage, *i.e.*, if you care to teach the Chinaman.

The copra industry is carried on like this. Cocoanuts are split open to rot in the sun. Then the meat is put into bags. A pre-school child might want to watch it twice.

The only war canoe I saw in ten thousand miles of travel in the South Pacific put out to meet us in the harbor of Apia. It was garlanded with flowers and its occupants were singing beautifully. At the prow stood a native in a six-dollar Rochester, N. Y., suit playing, on a silver cornet, "Onward, Christian Soldiers." They had come out from the mission to greet the new brethren and sistern of the Church of England, arriving to teach them three more hymns and the miracle of Jesus. (They had a new Chrysler in the hold.)

IV.

Failure of my schooner to call back for me meant staying on Makemo a little more than three weeks, instead of a little less than one. My rescue was accomplished by a three-hundred-pound Jesuit, returning to Tahiti to be vested with the bishopric. Watching him pull his launch up in the davits single-handed, sipping his *vieux marc*, speeding westward for Tahiti and maybe a good dish of beans, I was a convert, *muy pronto*.

I dare you to say a harsh word about a missionary!

WORMS WITH A BOOKTURN OR INTELLECTUAL LIFE IN NEW YORK

by ERNEST BOYD

THE Unread Writers' Guild will read their own manuscripts at the Meeting Place, 987 West 264th St., at 8 o'clock Sundays . . . Heywood Broun will speak tonight at the Y.M.H.A. on "Justice for the Speakeasy" . . . Dr. Samuel D. Schmalhausen will lecture at 8:30 tonight at the Higher Training Centre for Girls on "Is Sex Possible?" . . . V. F. Calverton will speak on "The Marxian Approach to Wome " at the Institute for Advanced Thought at 8:4, P.M. . . . Mrs. Anita Block, of the Playreading Department of the Theatre Guild, will lecture anywhere on any subject connected with the drama . . . Harry J. Witzenheimer will explain James Joyce's "A Work in Progress" at the Loyal Hibernian Hall, Amsterdam Avenue, tomorrow at 7 P.M. . . . Dave X. O'Brien will speak at the same place at 7:30 on "The Need for a Catholic Censorship of Literature" . . . Professor George P. Shaker, of the Department of English at the University of Oelrichs, South Dakota, will discuss Dickens' "Christmas Carol" at Columbia University McMillin Theatre at 8:30 P.M. . . . A debate "That Socialism and Marxianism are Incompatible" will take place at 8:45 tonight at the Town Hall. The speakers, Mike Gold and Norman Thomas, will both take the affirmative . . . Louis Bromfield writes that he is bathing in Majorca and that his new book is fine . . . Will Cuppy has just dropped in to steal our copy of "The Murder in the Hayloft" . . . Dear old Will. . . . I wish I could mention a new book of his . . . Carl Van Doren, who is in Miami getting sunburned, sends a postcard saying that Mark Van Doren's latest "Anthology of American Poetry" has been selected by the Literary Guild . . . Burton Rascoe likes our new novel "The Shadow Chasers" (Smith and Robinson, Inc., $2.50) so we feel we must tell our readers how much we like Burton . . . We have been asked to a tea given by Emily Clark for Julia Peterkin . . . to a lunch given by Emma Mills for Dr. Einstein . . . to a dinner given by the Literary Guild for all the writers we usually mention in this column . . . to a tea given by the Viking Press . . . a lunch given by . . . a tea . . . a lunch . . . a dinner . . . tealunchdinner, tealunch, dinner, tealunchdinner, tea, lunch, dinner . . .

R.I.P.

The Editors, impressed by the large seating capacity of the ladies' rest rooms in Rockefeller Centre, offer the suggestion that they forthwith be rented out to Little Theatre groups in search of auditoriums.

THE HUNGARIAN YEN FOR AMERICA

by YVETTE SZEKELY

IN Hungary's largest textile manufacturing concern, where I happen to be employed at present, most of my co-workers want to go to America. Why? Here are six types and six reasons:

Grizi is about thirty-five. Short and round. Oily, bobbed, stringy black hair, combed on the side with a straight, slanting dip from the middle of the forehead to the ear, where the hair is caught by a glass ruby-studded brooch. The absence of the two teeth, that follow the first four upper front ones on either side, reveals the wet loiling of her tongue when she speaks. Vacant, small brown eyes blink through her rimless, thick-lensed glasses. She lives in a small, dark flat with her seventy-five-year-old mother. If, heaven forbid, her dear mother should die and release her from years of servitude, she would go to America. She wants to get married, which is almost impossible here for a girl without a dowry. What are American men like? Is there hot and cold running water day and night? Are there nice kitchens? From literature of the Hollywood vintage, she finds American life stimulating. The night clubs must be "hot stuff," and the life of the gangsters fascinating. Is it true that all Americans jovially kick girls in the fanny?

The "doctor," a one time well-to-do landowner, having shed his former glory, works tirelessly from early morning until past overtime. He is old and flabby and soft, has protruding bloodshot eyes, a pronounced Roman nose, thick moist lips, and drooping moustachios. His chin and neck are bridged with loose bags of fleshless skin. At noon, when the others leave for lunch, he unwraps his greasy sausages from a newspaper, and delights in reciting the "Odyssey" in the original to me and a fellow-worker who remain in the office. Or he tells how his nephew, having run away from home at a tender age, bummed his way to America, splashed through mud and slime, became a full fledged M.D., and having made good, came back to Hungary for the privilege of greeting the folks at home with a triumphant sneer. The "doctor's" dream of America is a sniff of Wall Street and a glimpse of the knees of a Broadway blonde.

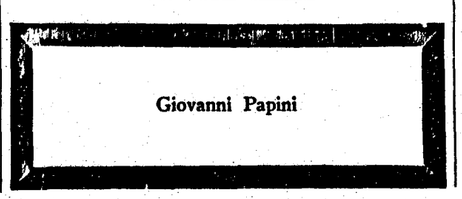
Bran, a tall, meaty, red-headed Jew of twenty-five, is interested in the moral and sex life of American Youth. Are the week-ends and petting parties as good as the movies say they are? Is a parked Ford the American nuptial couch? Is divorce actually an over-night matter? According to Bran, family and morals are inseparable, and America doesn't know the family. American women, according to him, demand independence, equality of the sexes, and discarding of conventions. Yet they expect the conventions to be respected by men, and want to be placed on a pedestal, from which they occasionally descend into the arms of their Romeos. Aside from this slight flaw, Bran yearns for the Home of the Brave, dreaming of it as a sexual Utopia.

Our stenographer has gipsy eyes and a wind-blown bob. Retaining an old-fashioned privilege of her sex, she faints at least once a week, for the fuss of it. She wants to go to America because she feels that she could enter a dance hall unaccompanied and still retain her respectability. The American men again, what are they like? The trend of styles, the price of a hat? Just the place for a young divorcée.

Andell finished High School recently and is industriously working for a pat on the back from the boss, and maybe a raise in salary during the next five years. He wants to go to America because of the chances one has for working one's way up, say from clerk to salesman. He asks about the price of a dinner date with a "nice" girl, and later maybe a bedroom, parlor, ice box and crib for an infant son, who would have as great a chance of becoming President as the janitor's boy. It's Democracy he's after.

Chiller walks the two miles from his home to work and back four times a day to keep fit. He is interested in American architecture, a lot of money and in marrying the girl he has been engaged to for the past seven years. They're saving up. The price of a Harlem apartment and the "prog am changed twice a week" uptown movie. Money. Money. Money. And by the way, would the Hungarian method of picking up a girl on the street be workable in New York?

It is interesting to note that, of these six workers all wishing to go to America, only one would go with the object of remaining permanently; the others, having made their fortunes (as they still naively imagine) or having had their flings, would all return to tell the tale and buy a house. The intellectual of Budapest speaks of America with disgust. He hasn't the slightest desire to leave his slow, lazy, comfortable life for the dizzy speed of a dizzy country, spun 'round by dollar-hustlers. The peasant beggar class knows little or nothing about America. The white collar slaves see it as a treasury and bawdy house. And the intellectual prefers cynically to eye "Main Street" from a pocket Tauchnitz on the terrace of his favorite coffee house.



Giovanni Papini

IN BLACK AND WHITE

by HAAKON M. CHEVALIER

THEY looked up into the night full of stars. All was black, save the trembling glitter from above.

"Oh, isn't it perfect!" she cried.

"Almost, but not quite. . . ."

His right hand abandoned its soft pressure against her and reached into a waistcoat pocket. He pulled out a pencil. And with its gummed end he erased the stars, one by one, until the night was a perfect black, every glimmer of light extinguished.

"There, my dear!"

There were tears in her eyes.

"How could you!"

"And now—." He led her in through the open doorway, and helped her to undress. Her clothes came off, one by one, yielding her pale body. Her thighs showed two white columns; her slender arms freed themselves; then soft shoulders, her breasts broke loose from pale silken folds, and a faint downward ripple released all her curves and shadows.

"And now . . ." he said again. But she raised her hand.

"Just a moment—your pencil, please."

". . . But . . .?"

He watched her, puzzled. She took the pencil, holding the gummed end. Reaching down, she carefully erased the triangle of shadow that broke, mid-way, the whiteness of her body, erased the delta of folds which it concealed, and the dark wavering line to the floor; then flicked off the umbilical speck and the dark tips of her breasts. So that her body was a perfect unbroken white.

"There, my dear," she said.

THE SUPERFLUOUS EDITORIAL

by WILLIAM ARTHUR DEACON

SETTLING on a subject for treatment in the literary editorial is the hardest task of a literary editor's life. The thought must be weighty enough to be worth saying, and obviously must be about literature. The difficulty is that Art is truly long, even the art of letters; and, since the author of Proverbs complained of the over-production of books, a great deal has already been said. Moreover, the major principles of Art are few: theories of it, while universally unsatisfactory, revolve uncertainly between a limited number of fixed points; and the discovery of a new, fundamental point of view is so rare that a critic would be exceptionally blessed if he had a genuine revelation to make once in a lifetime.

Mr. Lamb and Mr. Hazlitt and Mr. Matthew Arnold, and others too numerous to mention, have between them written exhaustively about these matters, and some of them ably. Yet it is a truism that none of their elaborations proves in the ultimate quite sound; and this is not due appreciably to the jealousies of the exponents of rival systems. Literature, like Life, is founded on a mystery. No one knows the secret of its power because no one knows what it is. Hence its vitality, its capacity to take an infinity of new forms while remaining the same in everlasting intangible essence. The Thing may be divined but not defined.

Were it otherwise, the definition once framed —the conclusive, comprehensive, deadly accurate definition—, the next inevitable step would be the devising, from that definition, of a formula for the manufacture of the flawless and all-satisfying masterpiece, beyond which men need not seek and would not seek to experiment in the alchemy of the written word. The world's last book would be written; and the whole vast adventure, that has engrossed millions of lives for thousands of years, would be over forever. That may be the "one divine, far-off event" toward which the whole world of letters moves; but it will hardly be a consummation devoutly to be wished by any one who, as reader or writer, has passionately loved the quest.

Literature is subject not only to fashions, modes of the moment that matter little, but also to the deeper ebb and flow of the tides of its great ally, Life; and the spirit as well as the form changes from age to age. Great movements have names, not merely as handy tags for academic debate, but because of real distinguishing characteristics. Consideration of new tendencies is the best use to which the literary editorial can be put; but once a decade is as often as they may be appraised to advantage, unless one is to wail continually (and foolishly) over the departed glories of twenty or forty or a hundred years ago. . . . That battle—between the classic and the modern—rages eternally, and to small profit; for the wise man will be found standing between the two, with a hand graciously extended toward each.

If Mr. P. P. Howe is right in calling the critic "the ideal spectator who has by an accident become vocal," the literary editorial's function must be to utter the incontrovertible verdict. Relying cheerfully on life's imperfections, we can only hope that in our time, at least, the last word will never be written; that we may be spared the perfect and, therefore, final editorial.

Definition—Constructive Thinker: One who thinks that the platitudes of yesterday are the eternal verities of tomorrow.

A STUDY IN SCARLET

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

IN the last few months, no less than eight of our esteemed contemporaries—a number of them themselves yelling passionately for uncle—have published articles singling out the legitimate theatre as being permanently broke from persistent lack of customers and groaning for the undertaker. Under the circumstances, it may be entertaining to scrutinize the isolated corpse and get the lay of the whole cemetery. Herewith, then, some statistical results of the aforesaid scrutiny, in terms of relative gobs of red ink, up to the moment that the late bank moratorium crucified theatre along with other trade:

1. All save one of the moving picture theatre chains are either already in bankruptcy or in the hands of receivers. "Design for Living" had been playing to capacity, plus standees at every performance, since its opening on January 25, the box-office intake mounting as high as $28,000 weekly.

2. More than half of the moving picture companies are either already in or on the verge of bankruptcy. "Dinner at Eight" had been grossing a great business since its opening on October 22.

3. Most of the large American municipalities are bankrupt, unable here and there even to meet the city pay-rolls. "When Ladies Meet" had been playing to a good box-office since October 6, leaving New York only a few weeks previously.

4. Never in the history of America have there been so many and such disastrous bank failures. More than 1200 banks failed last year, and 389 in the first two months of this. "The Late Christopher Bean" had been doing a pretty trade since its opening on October 31, in certain weeks netting its producer between $6,000 and $7,000.

5. The book publishing business has never been worse, any number of publishers being already in hock. "Alien Corn" had been playing to between $15,000 and $17,000 since its opening on February 20.

6. Most of the big hotels are in bankruptcy and in the hands of receivers. "Twentieth Century," which opened on December 29, was showing a nice profit, as was "Goodbye Again," which opened the night before.

7. Nine-tenths of the better known magazines are heavily in the red—one of the celebrated old-timers to the tune of a quarter of a million dollars, another losing $400,000 a year, another losing $75,000 a year, still another already $180,000 in the hole, and still another ready to call quits. "Music in the Air" had been playing to good business since November 8; "Take a Chance" had been packing them in since November 24; "Dangerous Corner" had been able to make a business go of it since November 21; "Biography" had had a steady trade for three months; and "Of Thee I Sing," now on the road and doing a sweet business, finished a whole year's run in New York in high style.

8. Business generally is depressed eighty per cent below that of 1929. The Theatre Guild, by virtue of its annual subscription list, still finds itself in sound financial condition.

9. Most of the railroads are broke, a goodly share of them in the hands of receivers. "Melody" had been crowding them in at the Casino; "Gay Divorce," which opened on January 16,, was playing to very profitable business; and "Strike Me Pink," despite the bank closings, piled up a gross of $27,000 in the worst week in theatrical history.

10. Apartment houses can't pay their mortgages. "Mademoiselle" played several months to a fair box-office; and "Success Story," cheaply rigged up, did a moderate trade for eight weeks.

11. The United States Steel Corporation, with production eighty per cent below normal, showed a deficit of almost $92,000,000 at the end of 1932, the greatest in over thirty years. "Criminal at Large" played from December 19 to late in February, presumably to at least enough business to keep it going; and "Autumn Crocus," which opened on November 19, was returning a nice little profit.

12. The United States Treasury shows an accumulated deficit of $5,000,000,000, the total present debt of the country being $21,000,000,000. "Another Language," running over into the current season from last season, played over forty weeks to excellent business; the Abbey Players enjoyed such a relatively lively engagement in New York that a short return engagement was called for; and the Messrs. Wee and Leventhal, shoestring producers, had managed to make a small profit each week on several revivals of plays of previous years.

13. Automobile production is almost fifty per cent below that of last year. Even "Lucrece," which was a failure in New York, played to big business at its try-out performances on the road; and "Rhapsody in Black," playing at a fifty-cent scale in Philadelphia, grossed more than $20,000 in the very week of the bank moratorium.

14. The internal debt of the United States is $210,000,000,000. "Green Pastures," now playing the road after a gold-mine year of it in New York, is still doing a tasty trade; and "Counsellor-at-Law," after a long and highly profitable engagement in New York, has done good business on the road.

15. The cloak and suit business—regards to the Jewish Insulls in whose banks its money was deposited—finds itself caught with its pants down. "Yoshe Kalb" was playing to the biggest box-office trade that the Yiddish Art Theatre had ever known.

* * *

FOOT-NOTE: *The above survey was written on March 14. It was set up by the printer on March 20. It went to press on April 3. Three weeks after the end of the bank moratorium, the date of going to press, the theatre, it may be recorded, is in numerous quarters doing as profitable a business as it did directly before.*

A VULGATE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

by KATHARINE ANTHONY

TO us who are living in the present, the period preceding the French Revolution presents a kindred aspect. It was a time much like our own. Viewed in this similar light, it recalls the French proverb: *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.* The more things change, the more they remain the same.

Lawlessness, comparable to that which surrounds us, weltered through the pre-Revolutionary era. Corruption was so common among high and low that it was taken for granted. Bribery was a matter of course. Counterfeiting was a jest. Gangsters and crooks had the upper hand and all deviousness was smiled at.

Lately we enjoyed a pretty exhibition in an American city. A mayor was publicly exposed as an unworthy servant and because he was shameless and flippant the people were with him. His front made up for everything. Because he could always answer back, the crowd supported him and applauded him, even when he stood revealed as selfish and avaricious. The performance was strictly in the spirit of the frivolous time that preceded the French Revolution.

When the news-reel showed the American mayor and his favorite playing golf, the people only sat in their seats and smiled. Exactly so Louis XV was seen in his box at the theatre with Madame de Chateauroux before the French Revolution. An impostor like Beaumarchais was as popular as Prince Mike Romanoff, with the award of a diamond ring to take the place of Prince Mike's tribute of box-office receipts. Our public, like the French, seems to have grown indifferent to the infraction of its own rules. There is a moral depression that equals the financial depression.

Government, as far as pre-Revolutionary France can be said to have had a government, was in the hands of the totally incompetent. They were incompetent because they were unable to deal with the situation in any way. There was never a period in any country when the people at the top were more thoroughly unqualified, and there was never a period in any country when real statesmen and economists were more badly needed. The only system of which the French had any understanding was the system of exploitation—the same as that on which we have been operating ever since the Civil War. It does not cultivate experts. Louis XV's council was as helpless in the face of the financial difficulties as our own high councils.

France was in a financial crisis like our own. The trouble was of long standing. The deficit for which Louis XVI was finally executed was inherited from his grandfather, Louis XV. It was fifty years old. Ours is still in its infancy, but give it time and it may attain an equally hoary old age.

The French public did not know about the deficit until Necker told them. But those in charge previously, including Madame de Pompadour, had known of its existence and had failed to make the changes required by the conditions. So the amount increased by leaps and bounds until it reached staggering proportions for those times: eleven and a half million dollars a year. When Necker released the scandal, the court hastily adopted little footling economies, like merging departments and cutting down vacations, while the deficit went on merrily increasing. The French people spoke of it as we now speak of the depression; they personified it.

Everybody in France speculated or gambled in some form. Ordinary people were drawn into the excitement. Madame Roland tells how her father speculated in diamonds. "He purchased diamonds and other jewels," she says, "or took them in pay from the tradesmen who employed him, to sell again as opportunity offered. His art was sufficient to procure him a comfortable subsistence; he sought to become rich and ended by being ruined." The share-holders in the East India Company were regarded with a kind of popular idolatry as share-holders in a few American companies were until lately regarded here. When Necker, who had amassed a fortune by speculation, was appointed minister of finance, stocks rose as much as thirty points in one morning. The public believed that he was a financial magician and would do the same thing for others that he had done for himself.

II

Superstition ran riot. There is nothing about which people are more superstitious than they are about money. Since the depression began in this country we have seen the rise of fortune-telling in all its forms: palmistry, horoscopy, numerology, etc., etc. So it was in pre-Revolutionary France that Cagliostro, the magician, celebrated his greatest triumph. His association with financial and business magnates at a round-table in Cardinal de Rohan's mansion tells the story sufficiently. Cagliostro's corkscrew curls and glittering eye would have warned off any who were not already co-operating in their own downfall.

Beaumarchais' career was similarly in the time-spirit. The author of the best comedies of the day was simultaneously the author of its meanest libel. He was a villain of the purest ray, who composed the document which he pretended to have discovered and for the suppression of which he wanted to be paid. An American Beaumarchais worked somewhat similarly, only he waited until his victim was dead, and obtained his money then directly from the public. Except for the slight difference of literary talent, there is nothing to choose between them.

The only god in France was ancestry. But even this deity was not sincerely worshipped. When one reads the annals closely, one is surprised to see

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 5)

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THIS BIBLIOGRAPHY NONSENSE

by THOMAS BURKE

I CANNOT understand this first-edition and bibliography game. Collectors of first-editions, in my observation, are people who pay a second-hand bookseller £12 or £20 for a book which normal people bought when it appeared for 7s.6d. or 15s. As for bibliographies, I don't see their reason in relation to books of any kind; still less do I see a reason for them in relation to the books of modern writers. Yet such bibliographies are being published every month or so in America and England, and second-hand booksellers, and their customers, buy the things and discuss them.

I always thought it a funny game but I wasn't concerned to say anything about it because it was no business of mine. But now that it has forced itself upon my attention, and come right into my home, I am entitled to make a note of exclamation.

My first personal contact with it was a visit from an American bookseller, Mr. I. R. Brussel, who had just previously interred a certain well-known American author in a bibliography. He said he wanted to see all my books. I asked Why; I told him a list of them could be found in publishers' catalogues. He said he wanted exact dates, measurements, bindings, because he wanted to do a bibliography.

When I fully grasped what he was up to, I was first astonished, then amused, then bothered. I thanked him for his flattering attention, but I told him that he would only be wasting his time and making me ridiculous. The air of solemnity, I said, which hangs around a bibliography belongs only to the truly great whose work has received the mark of the Hall of Generations; or to the rare and "significant" whose work has received the mark of the coteries of the Dome and the Rotonde. But he wasn't listening. He was a bibliographer, and while I was making my efforts to prevent his dragging me into the game, he was opening my book-cases and examining my books. I made one more plea that he should leave me alone in my own street, and not dress me with his solemnities, but his only answer was that copies of some of my books (the usual copies sent to the author before publication) were not "firsts": the binding was too light or too dark; or some pribble-prabble of that sort. When I asked what it mattered, he looked at me as one of the faithful might look at an infidel and went on with his self-imposed task. Yet what *does* it matter?

A little later along came another young man on a similar errand. I told him what I had told Brussel. I told both of them that if they really wanted to waste their time I was an expert time-waster and could devise for them a dozen more amusing ways of doing it than bothering about the kind of end-papers used in the books of a living writer. There might possibly (I said) be some sort of reason for a bibliography of Chaucer, Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Bunyan, and a few others of the past whose writings have really affected mankind—but there's no reason for taking any contemporary seriously. There never was. His final position is uncertain, and his effect upon the thought and action of his fellows is not yet to be measured. Only posterity can rightfully take people seriously. When you extend this bibliography sport to taking in everyday entertainers like myself, you make me wonder what things are coming to, or whether they haven't already gone.

Through frequent meetings with these two gentlemen I learned that the sport has gone even farther than I had thought. In default of Chaucers and Dantes, all sorts of Toms, Dicks and Harrys are being canonized with bibliographies. I learned that there are now periodicals devoted to it, and articles discussing the "points," not of Caxtons and Wynkyn de Wordes, but of temporarily fashionable books published within the last few years. I learned that a very young writer who has published two novels and a few signed trifles has been made the subject of a book about him and his "Work"; and that studies of three or four others, who are not yet at the middle of their careers, are threatened.

Well, if all this is going to do the young beginners any good, and if the public is willing to take it, I wish them the best of luck. At my age, one ought not to be surprised by the response of the public to anything, however queer or superfluous; though I still wonder what it all has to do with the rich, rough world of literature and the love of books. And where the nonsense is going to stop.

There's another point. Listening to these two talking about "points" and about their discoveries of "items" of this or that man, I used to regard them as engaged in a childish but harmless hobby. I'm not so sure now. While any author must in decency express polite appreciation of their attentions, those attentions can in many cases be embarrassing. All writers who have no private income, and who support themselves and their dependents by their writing, publish at one time or another a deal of rubbish—jobs done as jobs. The smaller the man the greater the proportion of rubbish. The public kindly allows this rubbish the blessing of oblivion, and it rests unseen in the catalogues of the Library of Congress and the British Museum. But it is just this forgotten rubbish which the bibliographer loves to unearth. Why? Book-collectors, I know, are strange creatures and go to strange lengths in their vices, but I cannot believe that the most vicious collector wishes to load his shelves with rubbish, or even wishes to know that the author of a book which has pleased him has written rubbish. For myself, I do not want the Complete Works of even the great writers. I want only their best work. A comprehensive bibliography, even of those few great who deserve bibliographies, I consider not only unnecessary but unkind.

THE ART OF WILL H. HAYS

AN HONORLESS BEAUTY FIGHTING THE LAW AND LAWLESS IN A LAND OF FORGOTTEN MEN
She WAS THE ONLY WHITE WOMAN on an ISLAND OF EXILED MEN
THE STORY OF A SCARLET SISTER WHO SANK TO THE DEPTHS OF SHAME!
Crawford RAIN
The Gang from The GAS HOUSE And The GIRLS from the NIGHT CLUBS In A Whirlwind of Action!
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A GIRL WHOSE LIFE WAS NO BED OF ROSES
TOO HONORLESS TO BE LOVED
VIRGINS OF BALI
LEE TRACY
What Would you DO with a LOVE like this?

A LITTLE LECTURE ON THE FEAR OF HOKUM

by LOUIS GOLDING

NATIONS, like individuals, have their own special weak spots—or phobia, to use the more fashionable term. And the odd thing about it is that the very quality they fight so shy of is often the very quality that other people find most attractiv in them.

Take the English, for instance. As a nation, we have a deadly fear of sentimentality, of wearing our hearts on our sleeves. Excepting, of course, in the matter of sport. We are then allowed to express our sentiments with the irreticence of a group of cannibals who have unexpectedly come across a shipment of succulent missionaries. The American skyscraper fanatic would be amply compensated for his trouble by the spectacle of a crowd at an Oxford and Cambridge Rugby Match at Twickenham. Only the minority of the enormous crowd are young men. Our ancient universities, unlike one or two great scholastic emporia of the American Middle West, support a population of only a few thousand apiece. The crowd consists of middle-aged and elderly professional gentlemen—lawyers, architects, financiers, statesmen, authors . . . or would you hesitate a moment before calling authors either professional or gentlemanly? They are Englishmen and they are, reputedly, unsentimental. But watch their behavior when Cambridge breaks through and scores a try, or Oxford converts from an incredibly acute angle.

Have you ever seen the crowd in Naples when the blood of San Gennaro hesitates to liquefy? Can you conceive the deportment of the crowd at the storming of the Bastille? The Neapolitans, the Parisians, are as a young girls' dancing-class compared with the foaming hysteria of our elderly gentlemen at Twickenham.

For the fact is not only are we the most sentimental people in the world, but our sentimentality is the one quality in us which the whole world approves of. Our most popular literary artists, from Charles Dickens to George Bernard Shaw, are loaded honeycombs of sentiment. No possible figure is so beloved by strangers as our policeman, who architecturally dominates our landscapes like Garibaldi in Italy and Bismarck in Germany. There he stands, the British policeman, the great blue-and-white truck-load of him, a monument of sentimentality. Observe him paralyze a whole city's traffic to allow a little gold-haired girl clasping her dolly to trip sweetly across the road.

Our undergraduates, our cynical young men who go to live in Bloomsbury, for whom no music exists before Hindemith and no painting before Braque, are the only rivals of our policemen in the matter of sentimentality. That is the real reason for the sardonic novels in which they describe the deaths of their mothers with such meticulous ecstasy. Because they have the hearts of doves they twist their faces to look like sophisticated vultures.

The terror of the French is of a different nature. It is their greatest fear that they be deemed uncunning in the matters of sex; which is why earnest little boys at the lycée behave like dashing boulevardiers and the most devoted wives or husbands write letters to themselves purporting to come from lovers or mistresses. For only in that way can they hold their heads up at the café or the hairdresser's. This is why the French write and read such infinite volumes on the correct treatment of wives or husbands or lovers or mistresses. They do not know. They are born, and die, naïve.

In the real, the almost inaccessible, French family, the women are cloistered in a system of domestic purdah which might do no dishonor to a Madrasi nabob. The women you see in Parisian cafés dandled on the knees of amorous gentlemen, and sipping crême de menthe out of the same glass with them, are seldom Frenchwomen. Nor are the gentlemen often Frenchmen.

It is the sexual naïvete of the real French that the discriminating traveller finds so touching. The men actually believe from decade to decade that Sorel and Mistinguette are enchanting. And they design for their women the loveliest clothes; but surely when you understand a woman, and when she understands you, it doesn't matter what she wears, if anything.

The Chinese have such a terror of discourtesy, that they would rather cut a man's throat with exquisite decorum than jostle him rudely on the pavement. In their dislike of indecorum, they have established a most exact scale of obligations and penalties. For actual patricide, the punishment is the Death by a Thousand Cuts, an unpleasant performance, which can only be conducted by a surgeon of exact scholarship. As the incisions are made, a certain tabulated amount of blood must flow. The wounds are healed by an application of rough salt. The patient thus persists for three months.

The authentic story is told of a young official who was so slack in his duties that his father took his life for shame of his son's ineptitude. The young man was declared guilty of virtual patricide, but, in virtue of his blameless character, was informed that he need undergo no punishment more painful than decapitation. He was furious at the discourtesy implied both to his father's memory and himself. He insisted on dying the Death by a Thousand Cuts. The family physician punctiliously obliged him.

The phobia of the Austrian is not so devastating. You must think him, and declare him, *gemütlich*, or he will have no use for you. Though he has just discovered his wife in her boudoir entertaining a cavalry lieutenant, though he has just lost his parents and children in a steamer accident on the Danube, he must hum a valse from Oscar Strauss and stroke his chin nonchalantly. Otherwise, he fears, he will be deemed *ungemütlich*.

The German's dread of being thought ill-informed, *ungebildet*, is mournful to look upon. Do not imply your belief that he has not read the whole of Hegel and cannot continue any quotation from either section of Faust. He is apt to take it unkindly.

Which takes me at length to the obsessing terror of you Americans. You are more afraid of "hokum" than you are of your favorite stock going down twenty points. The fear of hokum has added largely to your vocabulary, (though I would not dream of transcribing any specimens lest, in the short time that has elapsed since I heard them with my own ears, they already be as outmoded as the Elizabethan "by my halidom" or "gadzooks.")

A typical piece of hokum, which you Americans will repudiate most bitterly, is the suggestion that Queen Elizabeth slept in every four-poster canopied bed in England. Another piece of hokum which you properly and scornfully repudiate is the suggestion that every Englishman who visits America was educated at Eton and Magdalen and is a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron Club, and that every Viennese adorned with a certain pattern of side-whisker is a Herr Baron.

No wonder, therefore, that you Americans have become so exacerbated by the countless acts of hokum that the hokumists have sought to perpetrate on you both at home and abroad, that you have become the most skeptical and disillusioned of mortals. It is now hard to convince you that Queen Elizabeth, far from having slept in five thousand four hundred and sixty-three beds, ever slept in any bed at all, that every Englishman did not go to the Penitentiary Institute at Borstal, and that every Viennese is not a pastry cook. You have been subjected to acts of hokum in your own country organized on a scale so colossal that the poor European hokumist goggles with amazement and despair.

No wonder you gag. No wonder your brows beetle formidably when the faintest suggestion of hokum afflicts your nostrils. And the consequence has been that the last dozen years have seen the birth of a whole new American industry, of which the specific purpose was to unmask and frustrate hokum. I mean the industry called "debunking." I need not instance the names of the high priests of debunking, who function as much in medical journalism as in the novel, the drama, criticism and the pulpit. Steadily and relentlessly the high priests have pursued their debunking way, so that hardly anything is left now but to debunk the debunkers. And indeed it was about time, too, that the debunkers should be debunked in their turn. For that very skepticism and disillusion which they fostered only bred a new sort of credulity, more naive and more injurious than the old.

The anti-hokum attitude breeds a dreadful suspicion of all candor and all enthusiasm. I have had to keep a very careful check on myself in America when I was about to praise a magnificent sunset or a great sweep of the Mississippi, lest I be accused of the arrantest hokum. For it happened to me a minute or two after my first arrival in America. (I am forced to state that it is the visiting Englishman's alleged hokum to which the American is most sensitive.) I was still dizzy with that first moment of revelation, the first sight at dawn of the sky-line upon the Hudson River. A distinguished New York journalist did me the honor to transcribe a few incoherencies I uttered soon after I landed, the surge of the Atlantic in my ears and the dazzle of that terrific dawning still in my eyes. And though he treated respectfully my opinions regarding the Modern Cocktail Girl and Chinese Pottery, I can hardly bring myself to record how he snorted when I suggested, in breathless syllables, the astonishment and rapture and dismay produced in me by the Hudson sky-line. "An Englishman's hokum!" he wrote, severely, in his article that evening.

"An Englishman's hokum!" Heaven help you, Mr. Interviewer! If a man should declare that the sight of the Sphinx and the Pyramids on a night of strict stars affected him somewhat powerfully, shall it be imputed to him for hokum? Or the sight of the shimmering towers of Zion from the Mount of Olives and the way the tawny desert of Judea hurtles disastrously down toward the Dead Sea and the uneasy hills beyond? Or the things seen from the Acropolis of Athens—silver coils of Ilissus, hacked marble from Pentelicus, golden bastions of Ægina? Or all Sicily flowing in frozen waves from the Saracen tower of Castrogiovanni, flowing toward the vast inverted lily of Etna, toward the African and Tyrrhenian seas? Because, oh Mr. Interviewer, these things have all been seen before and described countless times before—is it hokum that when a man sees these things for the first time, or the hundredth time, he is smitten into humility and incoherence?

I haven't any doubt it is a good thing to be on your guard, to be a "wise guy." But doesn't this dread of hokum become almost as embarrassing as the Chinese dread of discourtesy? Will it be hokum some day if a young man loves his girl and a mother her child? For, after all, these things, too, have been done before.

No, I don't think it will do the Englishman any harm to confess now and again to his deep inherent sentimentality or the Frenchman to admit his ineradicable chastity.

Nor will a little mild hokum do you Americans much harm.

A VULGATE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

(*Continued from Page 2, Col. 5*)

how much ancestry was discounted. To be sure, it was worshipped openly; but those who worshipped it most ardently were constantly over-riding its laws. The King's mistresses had no ancestry. Rich merchants and land-owners could buy their entrance to court. They could marry their daughters to titles, and their sons likewise. Madame Roland tells the story of a certain peasant. "I had heard a thousand times . . .," she says, "of his coming to Paris from his village, and rising by degrees to the accumulation of thousands at the expense of the public, of his marrying his daughter to Montule, his granddaughters to the Marquis du Chaillu and Count Turpin, and leaving his son heir to immense treasures." Such careers were possible in a country in which ancestry was the supreme god. Ancestry, like capitalism, simply would not march. It had served its purpose and was out-worn.

Sexual life in France had reached an ingrowing, festering state not easy to account for. Some student of psychology or anthropology needs to dig into that era as he now digs into Samoan or Indian communities. The Revolution was a tribal paranoia.

It was preceded by wide-spread sexual degeneration. Symptomatic was the obscene attack on Marie Antoinette who did not in herself offer an excuse for it. Pornography flourished as seldom before or afterwards. Symptomatic as well were the Chevalier d'Eon and the Marquis de Sade who flaunted their peculiarities in an unabashed environment. The arrangement between Fleury, the young actor, and the Venetian Ambassador was serenely accepted by the public. Robespierre, the giant of the Revolution, wrote pale despairing love-poems. France had gone sterile. Everything breathed decay.

Whether the same amount of decadence exists among us is a matter of opinion. The evidence is not so acute. Hollywood and Reno are temperate and bourgeois by comparison with the sexual tone of pre-Revolutionary France. The difference is not so much a moral as a sanitary one. We catch our Rousseaus, d'Eons, and de Sades and shut them up in psychopathic institutions before their genius has a chance to develop. Only occasionally does a talent like William Faulkner's remind us that we have such men still among us. But the scene is too tame on the whole to suggest the sexual ferment which prevailed in France prior to the Revolution. Without this concomitant, there can be no equivalent of the French Terror.

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MOTHER'S DAY

by VEE TERRYS PERLMAN

UNDOUBTEDLY she had seen younger days, but better? It was difficult to imagine. Her face told in the unmistakable language of lines such a long-established story of worry, suffering and endless labor.

She was old and even her body was workworn into unexpected and ugly angles.

But as she sat there on the bench in the early Spring sunshine, apparently enjoying the music of the band, she swayed a little from side to side occasionally; and when a speaker, following the music, announced to the thousands awaiting his message that motherhood was sacred and mothers the light of the world, she whispered proudly, "Ain't it grand!"

"It is the duty of mankind," said the speaker, "to cherish mothers even as God cherished the Holy Mother. It is the mother's divinely appointed task to recreate the race and in the fulfillment of this, her special function, she partakes of something divine. Let us therefore, always in the future as in the past, never fail to pay homage at the shrine of mother and to do reverence to the best friend a man ever had!" Thunders of applause interrupted his peroration.

"Ain't it beautiful," murmured the old woman. "Things is so grand now. In my day we knowed it was right to be a mother, the Church blessed ye reg'lar, and the men folks praised Pop and joked and drunk 'im under the table; but we never had no set-up fer mothers with music and men tellin' about 'em, and folks clappin' their hands off." She swayed ecstatically, warmed by the liquor within her and the warmth of her emotions.

The speaker continued. "Nothing is too good for mother. And when I say nothing, I mean nothing. When a man marries he undertakes to love, protect and cherish his wife, but *I* say *what—about—mother?*" The thunder of applause roared out more violently than before. The old woman's thoughts raced on.

She thought of the nine children she had borne with a satisfaction derived from complete faith in those rewards upon which the speaker was dilating. True, their father, while never questioning the producing of more and more infants to care for, had seemed to grow bored on their arrival. After the first three he had developed a habit of wandering away when a birth was imminent or directly after for irregular periods, and after the ninth he had never come back at all.

But she had been equal to the occasion. Had she not worked her fingers ragged doing housework and washing to keep their offspring together and give them something to eat? One had died as a baby, one on the way to adolescence. But the others, her face nodded approvingly, she had brought up strictly in the way they should go.

Could she help it if, while she slaved for him and his brothers and sisters, Danny found evil companions, became a gangster, served time in Sing Sing, and thereafter dropped from sight?

Hadn't she cursed Ella with her own lips and told her she never wanted to see her again, daughter or no daughter, when that unnatural child, now married, had had an abortion performed upon the approach of her "first"? Well, Ella was getting along well in the world, she had heard through others, but *she* never would see her again, she thought with pursed lips, hugging to herself the glow of righteousness.

And Delia, the girl nearest to Ella, what a beauty she had brought forth there! And good, too, she was. Till she got workin' in that manicurn' place an' stayin' out late nights. Delia left home suddenly just like her old man. Must 'ave 'ad a streak 'o 'im in 'er, the old woman always thought.

But Anna took after *her*. Quiet, industrious, she was on duty at all hours in their cramped tenement rooms as assistant mother. Anna went to the factory early and handed over her pay to her mother. She married a boy she met in the factory and had four children in as many years. She coughed and finally when she had coughed herself into such weakness that she couldn't do her work, they had sent for a doctor. Soon after Anna went away in an ambulance to a public hospital for consumptives in the country. At first she visited Anna, but what with successive losses of freedom, she had got out of the habit and now she didn't know if Anna was alive or dead. She had lost track of her grandchildren also. Her son-in-law had moved out of the neighborhood. He lived with some girl who was supposed to take care of the children. That was all right. A man needs a woman.

But the one she loved most was her oldest boy. He had grown up to be a tall, healthy chap. He had fine friends and became a cop with uniform, brass buttons and all. His mother could never think of the blessing he had been to her without her eyes becoming watery.

But, of course, he couldn't be familiar with the likes of her after the disgrace she brought on the family. It wasn't that she drank. She had always done that. So had he, and the others. And the neighbors. The Irish made beer in their homes and the Italians made wine. Her policeman son often contributed something stronger. No, it wasn't that she drank—everybody knew that was the only relief a mother got—and a little fun was good for everybody, as her husband had always said—but it was because she had that habit of craving fresh air after steady drinking. Invariably she tried to walk the streets after a spree if it was cold, or sat in the parks lapping up the sunshine, as today, if it were warm.

II

That was where the law came in. She could drink as much as she wanted in her home, but the moment she budged out for a little air, some man with a uniform and sometimes without, would talk to her and take her to a judge and the judge would just as sure lock her up. She never understood what for. Only they did it over and over again, every time she craved air. She told them she had nine children.

Once a young man had bowed politely and after a few pleasant remarks had asked her if she could use two dollars. She remembered the little thrill of happiness she felt when his benevolence percolated to her slightly exhilarated consciousness. She remembered her vigorous "You bet!" and the hostile change that came over his face as he seized her arm. She had burned with anger in the court, and when the magistrate had intoned "soliciting" as well as "vagrancy" in the charge, she had sprung at the young policeman. She had longed to kill him. The attendants pulled her away. His word was final. She got six months.

She learned never to answer young men no matter how well intentioned they seemed. She learned she had plenty of companions, mothers of ten, twelve, even fourteen children. Like herself many stuck drily at their monotonous labor for months, then took their little drop to keep on going, and unless they were careful to stay within their own little room, like as not they found themselves supported by the public for a while thereafter. Each time they came out they had to make themselves a niche anew. Each time they had lost a little strength, a little courage, a lot of initiative. Some were picked up again before they had found a job. Some eventually knew only how to drift, making endless rounds of court, prison and street, while the public paid the piper for repeated trials and incarcerations. But meanwhile the officers were lengthening their records, they were getting promoted.

Another time they had shut her up for a long spell, the time she had laughed five days without stopping, except for drinks, when Uncle Sam had sent her two gold stars to replace the two boys who never came back from the war.

Her remaining children, she had brought them up so respectable, couldn't stand the arrests. She hadn't seen any of them for years. But they were fine children all right, and she was a fine mother. Mothers were all right. *All* mothers were all right. The speaker was all right. Times were changing. Things was grand

Somebody was singing "Mother Machree". A young, clean-cut looking cop who had been listening to the speeches and applauding at the proper places, sauntered toward the bench where the old woman sat swaying gently. She didn't see him until he stood beside her.

"Drunk again, eh?" he snorted.

The old woman, swathed in her comforting visions, looked at him with a gentle smile: "I'm a mother, sonny."

"A hell of a mother you are!" he replied and took hold of her arm.

The old woman's face became grim. With all her strength she resisted. "What *d'you* know about bein' a mother?" she inquired.

"None o' yuh lip!" he answered, and pulled her up.

She hated to leave the park, the gay sunshine after the gray Winter, the sweet air. But this youngster had the say. He might have been her own son. However, he didn't know that she had sons like him. She tried to tell him.

III

The magistrate, reading the charge made by the policeman, declared her a vagrant. "It isn't true, y'r 'onner!" she shrieked in horror at the prospect of being shut away again. "I'm gineral cleanin' woman at the Gotham Hospital and it's there I live!"

"You have no separate residence of your own?" he inquired severely.

"The 'ospital's my 'ome, I'm tellin' ye," she almost shrieked again.

"Three months," he said briefly. "Hurry it along," he whispered to his clerk. He was anxious to leave for a friend's cocktail party being given in honor of the day.

The sun shone briefly on her as she climbed into the prison van. Although she was sixty-three years old, as she had told the magistrate, and a poor drab creature never known to Eros, strong males must be protected from her sex allure. The young man in the uniform had said she was soliciting. The judge needed no other evidence.

As she stood before the Warden she begged that she might write a letter to the lady at the Women Prisoners' Relief to get her belongings at the hospital so that she might not lose them.

"Not tonight!" snapped the Warden. He was not unkind, but his nerves were a bit on edge from all the commitments he had received that day. "Women old enough to be grandmothers!" he growled.

"I had nine children," the old woman recited without expression.

"Huh! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

Just then his little daughter ran in and his face relaxed. "Daddy," she exclaimed importantly, "grandma is going to give me a great big doll for my birthday. That is, she said she would if you'd give me a carriage so I can take good care of it. Will you, daddy?"

The Warden smiled.

"Sure, little mother," he said. "You learn how to take care of children and they'll always take care of you."

"Cell 59," he added to the matron who was standing by.

HEARTH FIRE

by HELEN CROCKETT

OFTEN as I have sat, now moodily, now pensively, before an open fire, a question has brushed my mind. What peculiar power in the fact of fire charms the soul to indolent yet not empty peace? Why, having reclined a silent and inactive hour before glowing embers, should we leave reluctantly, feeling as though the narrow focus of our outlook were somehow philosophically broadened? Men whom we are accustomed to designate as primitive worshipped God; God was fire. With the slow passing of the primeval into the civilized, fire was degraded because God became intangible. Fire was utilitarian; it could be created by and usually controlled by man. Hence it lost prestige, regaining awe but not reverence when, God-like, it licked away a forest. Yet what god would find revenge in wiping out recalcitrant worshippers? A sinner surpasses a charred and empty universe, for sinners may be re-converted, whereas desolation is unmalleable.

In fire one finds a latent symbolism pregnant with the enigma of meaning with which man eternally confronts himself. In contemplating the symbol man contemplates, though it be subconsciously, all phases of the riddle, Life. Perhaps the indirection implied in the symbol is unwarranted as is the calm sophistication with which we assume that Heraclitus meant change when he conceived the substance of the universe to be fire. He very possibly meant what he said—that fire itself was ultimate reality.

For change, that ideal intangibility enthroned to make Heraclitus the greater thinker, is but one aspect of fire. It is, as in life, fire's most salient aspect. One cannot refrain from the mental comparison of ephemeral tongues of flame with ephemeral lives. Then there is the deeper significance of change in the apparent destruction of wood which becomes light, heat, and ash. That which had shape has become gray, sifting dust. All man knows changes—a difference in degree alone creates the illusion of permanence, as embers form a background for the play of flame, yet die in time. In time or in eternity, for time itself is change in measuring change. Its deceptive and paradoxical infinity is based on uniformity, for that which occurs and recurs is falsely clothed with the reliability of permanence.

As for meaning—is there meaning in change? Development springs easily to mental lips, yet toward what fixed goal is change moving that it may be dignified as development? Whatever order may be read into change, one can say no more than that the simple, through self-expression, becomes complex. But until the curtain of the finite may be raised, revealing on some dim horizon the changeless end of change, one may find interest but not significance in change.

As in life, no change occurs without expenditure of some resource. So fire lives consuming wood; that gone, it dies. No measured death like unwound clocks, but fitfully; blue, wraith-like flames snatching at some unspent bit. There comes an end when heat, the ghost of fire, haunts the bricks awhile and vanishes. That mammoth fire, the sun, will it turn blue some day and die for lack of nourishment? Even as the warmth of prehistoric earth receded, leaving a parched and crusty surface? A time when we, little gods who build little fires, will blow on blue fingers with frozen breath, and call upon the dead sun?

Sombre thoughts—unfathomable. Yet as the fire burns they brush the mind, which, lulled to peace by warmth and comfort, stirs uneasily. The firelit face is tinged with melancholy as, unaware, we spend an hour that is not—contemplating life in fire, or shall we term it justly, God?

ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS SERIES

No. 7

Major Yeat Brown, in the London *Observer:*

"Present-day America is surprised, stunned even, but not squealing."

REQUIRED READING

"We first came to know him [George Moore] late in life on the occasion of the translation of *Memoirs of My Dead Life* [1922]." Jean Prévost in *La Nouvelle Revue Française,* March, 1933.

Required reading: Terre d'Irlande. Paris: Charpentier, 1887; *Confession d'un Jeune Anglais.* Paris: Charpentier, 1888; *Femme de Cabotin.* Paris: Savine, 1889; *Esther Waters.* Paris: Hachette, 1905.

SEND YOUR BOY TO COLLEGE!

By the Associated Press.

Salem, Va.—Roanoke College has a goldfish club. Initiates must swallow alive one goldfish each. Dealers are calling for new supplies. The club numbers sixteen, including two coeds, and has a waiting list.

The Editors are gratified to learn that the rewards of literature are such that the Paramount movie cognoscenti paid $2,000,000 for such masterpieces, inter alia, as "Woman Who Broke the Rule" and "Wrong Gondola," by Otto Klingenberg; "Number, Please," by Sam Mintz; "Buy Your Woman," by Octavus Roy Cohen; "Woman Thou Art," by Grant Sinclair; "Ask Beccles," by Cyril Campion and Edward Dignon; "Clinging Vine," by Frea Jackson; "Lesson in Poverty," by Cecil Sternberg; "Too Much Efficiency," by E. J. Rath; "Here's Your Quarterback," by George Marion, Jr.; "Manhattan Model," by Gael MacLean; "Mary Makes A Call," by Homer Miles; and "My Wife," by Michael Morton.

WOMAN'S NEW FREEDOM

by LEONARD ROWE

THE paradox of woman begins and ends with her double function in the scheme of life: to amuse man and to reproduce him. The Greeks managed to create the finest civilization the world has ever known without requiring woman even for amusement. The Turks, somewhat impatient to wait for the orgiastic delights of Mohammed's bawdy heaven, brought their heaven down to earth in the form of the harem. Later Europeans, from the Crusades to Victoria, lacking either the civilization of the Greeks or the frankness of the Moslems, enveloped woman in a veil of romance, poetry and mysticism that almost concealed the essential reality of her double rôle: that of mistress and mother.

The so-called modern liberation of woman from the economic and political restraints of the ages has not, in the least, altered her essential character. Wherever she appears in a rôle other than that of mistress or mother, there is something very pathetic, even pathological, about her. She becomes the archetype of civilization's maladjusted, the logical extreme of what an artificial and hostile environment can do to distort and thwart natural development. Think of the millions of women factory workers, stenographers, school teachers and saleswomen secretly rebelling against their New Freedom that vouchsafes to them the high privilege of toiling in the factory, the office and the shop instead of enjoying the pleasures of the marriage bed, fondling their own babies, or dawdling in society—all prerogatives of the old fashioned, down-trodden woman. And how transparently hollow is their pretense that they enjoy having careers. Only when a woman has abandoned all hope of ensnaring a man—in other words, when she has grown so dry, withered and sexless that even she realizes it—can she honestly deceive herself into the absurd belief that she actually prefers her mean and underpaid drudgery to a scheme of life in which man lavishes on her protection, love and sexuality.

In reckoning, then, the defects of our machine civilization is it not likely that woman's "liberation" will be accounted the ultimate calamity, the most tragic by-product of a culture that has given us world wars, universal depressions, financial panics, enslavement to the machine, and standardization of tastes and ideas? And if her "liberation" has proved so complete a failure to herself, can it be argued that it has, nevertheless, benefited the race, that is, mankind in general? The question is silly on its face; for that which has brought tragedy to a whole sex cannot possibly bring good to mankind. But adopting, for the moment, the inhuman attitude that women in industry are mere slaves, mere tools in a man-made world, can we even then maintain that woman's "liberation" has benefited the world of the male? We cannot. In business and industry she has so glutted the labor market that the unemployment problem is now aggravated to a point where doles and breadlines present the only way out. To the arts and the professions she has contributed nothing new, original or valuable, unless we give her credit for a certain pseudo-French boudoir tone that lady decorators have given to our more swanky interiors.

Her contribution to the law has been an alarming annual increase of what the newspapers gallantly call "modern Portias," who rarely advance beyond office drudges and law-library flunkies, and who, occasionally, through a sort of perverse political shrewdness, attain to the lofty state of the Bench. And, so, we now have lady justices whose ponderous decisions are, with possibly a few rare exceptions, masterpieces of judicial ineptitude.

In politics, woman's record presents so sorry a spectacle that even the staunchest and most inveterate of her apologists must hang their heads. The ballot in her hands, which was to cleanse politics, oust corruption, purify morals and uplift the national life, has accomplished exactly nothing. Indeed, since woman's enfranchisement, there have blossomed forth such flowers of our culture as the Noble Experiment, Racketeering, Gang Warfare, and Bootlegging; and wherever woman has wallowed in the mire of office grabbing, she has emerged with the peculiar smell that characterizes the American political swine-trough. She has brought forth no Joan of Arcs, but instead only a lot of bucolic Saviours like Ma Ferguson.

Architecture, too, has attracted a goodly number of lady practitioners, but no Empire State Buildings or even county court houses masquerading as Roman Temples have yet risen from her blue prints. Instead, we owe to the lady followers of Brunelleschi and Christopher Wren such masterpieces of architecture as disappearing broom closets, heliotrope kitchen sinks, orchid mother-of-pearl seats for the *cabinet de nécessité,* and quaint dwellings that suggest nothing so much as a cross between Ann Hathaway's cottage and a Christmas *Lebkuchen.*

In music, literature and the fine arts, creative ability of anything approaching the first rank is so rare that a fourth-rate painter like Rosa Bonheur is as famous as Rubens; an Elizabeth Barrett Browning achieves a fame out of all proportion to her third-rate ability; while Cécile Chaminade, composer of tinkling saccharine vacuities, is the towering genius among women who practise the art of Beethoven and Brahms.

The only field in which woman has gained some little distinction is in the novel, where, however, for every Edith Wharton or Willa Cather there are legions of wholesome Gene Stratton Porters, sociological Gertrude Athertons, vacuous Mary Roberts Rineharts, pornographic Mae Wests, and aphrodisiac Elinor Glyns. No woman has ever achieved the epic sweep of a Cervantes, a Fielding, a Dickens, a Balzac—geniuses who with broad, heroic strokes painted whole civilizations on titanic canvases. The most we can find in even the best of woman's novels is the domestic intimacy of Dutch genre painting or the feminine delicacy of English miniatures.

Only on the stage can woman compete on equal terms with man. But this is because in the theatre she is completely herself—a woman. Here she drops the grotesque disguise of lady attorney, accountant and pedagogue, and appears in her own unmasked, natural beauty as herself: man's fulfillment and completion. For, on the stage, she is not usurping man's proper domain, hiding her womanly softness beneath the gargoyle mask of business, nor competing with him in masculine pursuits where, though bound to fail, she is nevertheless, in the meantime, a nuisance. In the theatre, woman is, again, man's mother and mistress.

Notwithstanding woman's increasing competition with man in the industrial world, her social relations with him are still controlled by the eternal mistress-mother spell she casts over him. All the manifold intricacies of etiquette, all the age-old amenities of social intercourse between man and woman, are still interfused with that complex of biological, emotional and historical factors that unites the medieval mysticism of Virgin worship with the physical drive of animal concupiscence. Except for minor differences of detail, social conduct between the sexes is the same now as it was a century ago. Adoration, protection and chivalry provide the keynote. Your dinner partner may be a Channel swimmer: nevertheless you elaborately assist her to her chair at the table. Miss Smith may be something of a plunger on the stock market, swear like a taxi-driver and have an income double yours: yet you pay for her drinks in the speakeasy.

Nobody but the reformers and fanatics are fooled as to woman's real nature. The textile and fashion industries with their hundreds of millions of dollars at stake are too astute to take seriously the futile posturings of the feminist as man's economic and political equal. They have found out that it is a thousand times more profitable to exploit her in her true character—as a woman. And still more profitable to cajole and flatter her as man's mistress rather than as his mother. For the maternal woman is wise, frugal and conservative; the harlot is vain, capricious and extravagant, and therefore a bigger consumer. So all the tricks of advertising and showmanship are employed to rouse from woman's darkest subconscious depths the harlot that the manufacturers hope lies dormant within her. How else provide a market for the passing fads, silly gewgaws and aphrodisiac baubles that the wheels of industry must turn out by the millions, only to be replaced by newer and crazier gimcracks.

Woman's enormous interest in these matters must be fed by scores of special periodicals that report the minutiæ of fashion changes to all feminine America, from the ladies of Park Avenue to the peasant customers of the mail-order houses. And almost every newspaper in the land contains daily accounts of the latest changes and developments of style. The Spring and Fall openings of the more renowned dressmakers of Paris are heralded to the ends of the earth by cable and wireless with all the éclat of the première of an opera. It is of greater moment what Chanel and Patou are "showing" than what fresh plunders MacDonald and Daladier are scheming.

In order to impel every woman to buy more clothing than she can possibly use, an immense machine of propaganda and publicity has been evolved that has distorted the idea of her clothing beyond all recognition of its original purpose. No longer is its function merely to cover the body's nakedness and to provide it with warmth and protection. Its new purpose is to endow the wearer with the visible evidences of her smartness, her luxurious taste and her extravagance. Snobbishness is carried beyond the limits of the crudest parvenu—there is no such thing as an intrinsically good fashion; it is good only if it is still sufficiently rare and expensive to make its wearer an object of envy. As soon as a hat or dress is copied and reproduced in quantities, it becomes a bad fashion, regardless of how beautiful it may be from a standpoint of line and color and design.

The purveyors and panderers to woman's fashion psychosis are too shrewd to address their customers in the cold, logical diction one would use in speaking to enfranchised, political abstractions. They employ instead the gushing accents of the teatable and the swooning intonations of the boudoir. One need only glance through the advertisements of any woman's magazine to see to what depths of fatuity and banality modern industry has descended to tempt women into buying its useless and frivolous wares. That otherwise intelligent women are not repelled by this sort of palaver is proof of their deep absorption in the subject matter.

The evidences of woman's ineradicable femininity are too obvious to require further proof. In a thousand manifold ways she reveals that physically and emotionally and functionally her part in the scheme of life is radically different from man's, and that where she attempts to compete with him in work that does violence to her mother-mistress nature, she becomes a hideous caricature of herself. Her purpose and destiny as evolved through a period of thousands of years on earth cannot be disregarded and outraged because of the historical accident of capitalism's need for more workers, more goods and more consumers. The grotesque attempts of the past century to make her man's sister-slave in industry and his colleague in the arts and professions do not delude her: she still prefers man's love to a career as an accountant.

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